AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 - 32   (Canceled).

33.   (Currently Amended) A method for enabling players in a multiplayer game to communicate with each other in a peer-to-peer network connection, in which communications of the peer-to-peer network connection bypass [[the]]a game server hosting the multiplayer game, and so as to reduce a workload of the game server hosting the multiplayer game, the method comprising:

a game server hosting a multiplayer game session;

requiring each person requesting to play in the multiplayer game session to first enroll in a game service operated by the game server;

authenticating each player attempting to play in the multiplayer game by determining if each corresponding player is enrolled in the game service and by checking credentials of each corresponding player attempting to play in the multiplayer game to verify that each corresponding player is authenticated by the game server, so that only persons who have enrolled in the game service and that have approved credentials are allowed to access the multiplayer game session as a player, wherein having approved credentials resulting from an enrollment process further comprises each player having agreed to a community policy to refrain from engaging in sexually explicit communications;

providing a first player that is authenticated with the game server and that has accessed the multiplayer game session a list identifying at least one other player that is both authenticated and that is currently accessing the multiplayer game session and that is enabled to communicate with the first player in a peer-to-peer network connection initiated by the first player, wherein the list of at least one other player includes the other players that are authorized and have agreed to abide by the community policy;

receiving a request from the first player selecting a second player from the list which lists said at least one other player that is both authenticated with the game server and that is currently accessing the multiplayer game session, wherein the request from the first player is a request from the first player for communication information corresponding to the second player and that is required to establish the peer-to-peer connection between the first player and the second player and that includes at least an IP address of the second player; [[and]]

in response to the request, transmitting the communication information comprising at least the IP address corresponding to the second player from the game server to the first player, wherein the first player, upon receiving the communication information, initiates the peer-to-peer communication with the second player by using the received communication information, the peer-to-peer communication comprising a voice communication; and

in response to receiving a notification from the first player indicating that the second player communicated to the first player a communication that violates the community policy, removing the second player from the list such that the second player is prohibited from playing multiplayer games hosted on the game server.

34.   (Previously Presented)   The method of Claim 33, wherein authenticating each player attempting to access the multiplayer game comprises assigning each player a unique user key, and wherein transmitting information about the second player from the server to the first player comprises transmitting the second player's unique user key to the first player, which is used by the first player in the attempt to open the peer-to-peer connection with the second player, thereby assuring the second player that the first player's attempt to open the peer-to-peer communication comes from a trusted player participating in the multiplayer game hosted by the game server.

35.   (Previously Presented)   The method of Claim 33, wherein if after receiving the communication information about the second player, the first player is unsuccessful in the attempt to establish the peer-to-peer communication with the second player, the method further comprises:

(a) notifying the game server that the attempt by the first player to establish the peer-to-peer communication has failed;

(b) transmitting information about the first player from the game server to the second player, the information being required for enabling the peer-to-peer communication to be established between the first player and the second player; and

(c) requesting the second player to establish the peer-to-peer communication with the first player.

36.   (Previously Presented)   The method of Claim 35, wherein if after receiving information about the first player, the second player is unable to establish the peer-to-peer communication with the first play, the method further comprises routing each communication between the first player and the second player through the game server.

37.   (Currently Amended) A computer readable storage media having stored machine instructions for implementing a method comprising:

hosting a multiplayer game session by a game server~~a game server hosting a multiplayer game session~~;

requiring each person requesting to play in the multiplayer game session to first enroll in a game service operated by the game server;

authenticating each player attempting to play in the multiplayer game by determining if each corresponding player is enrolled in the game service and by checking credentials of each corresponding player attempting to play in the multiplayer game to verify that each corresponding player is authenticated by the game server, so that only persons who have enrolled in the game service and that have approved credentials are allowed to access the multiplayer game session as a player, wherein having approved credentials resulting from an enrollment process further comprises each player having agreed to a community policy to refrain from engaging in sexually explicit communications;

providing a first player that is authenticated with the game server and that has accessed the multiplayer game session a list identifying at least one other player that is both authenticated and that is currently accessing the multiplayer game session and that is enabled to communicate with the first player in a peer-to-peer network connection initiated by the first player, wherein the list of at least one other player includes the other players that are authorized and have agreed to abide by the community policy;

receiving a request from the first player selecting a second player from the list which lists said at least one other player that is both authenticated with the game server and that is currently accessing the multiplayer game session, wherein the request from the first player is a request from the first player for communication information corresponding to the second player and that is required to establish the peer-to-peer connection between the first player and the second player and that includes at least an IP address of the second player; ~~and~~

in response to the request, transmitting the communication information comprising at least the IP address corresponding to the second player from the game server to the first player, wherein the first player, upon receiving the communication information, initiates the peer-to-

peer communication with the second player by using the received communication information, the peer-to-peer communication comprising a voice communication; and

in response to receiving a notification from the first player indicating that the second player communicated to the first player a communication that violates the community policy, removing the second player from the list such that the second player is prohibited from playing multiplayer games hosted on the game server.

38.   (Currently Amended) A networked game system for providing a gaming environment in which only authorized players are permitted to establish peer-to-peer communication with other authorized players during game play, thereby enhancing game play without requiring resources from the networked game system to manage ongoing communication between players, comprising:

a processor; and

a memory in communication with the processor, said memory storing machine instructions that cause the processor to implement a method comprising:

hosting a multiplayer game session by a game server~~a game server hosting a multiplayer game session~~;

requiring each person requesting to play in the multiplayer game session to first enroll in a game service operated by the game server;

authenticating each player attempting to play in the multiplayer game by determining if each corresponding player is enrolled in the game service and by checking credentials of each corresponding player attempting to play in the multiplayer game to verify that each corresponding player is authenticated by the game server, so that only persons who have enrolled in the game service and that have approved credentials are allowed to access the multiplayer game session as a player, wherein having approved credentials resulting from an enrollment process further comprises each player having agreed to a community policy to refrain from engaging in sexually explicit communications;

providing a first player that is authenticated with the game server and that has accessed the multiplayer game session a list identifying at least one other player that is both authenticated and that is currently accessing the multiplayer game session and that is enabled to communicate with the first player in a peer-to-peer network connection initiated by the first player, wherein the list of at least one other player includes the other players that are authorized and have agreed to abide by the community policy;

receiving a request from the first player selecting a second player from the list which lists said at least one other player that is both authenticated with the game server and that is currently accessing the multiplayer game session, wherein the request from the first player is a request from the first player for communication information corresponding to the second

player and that is required to establish the peer-to-peer connection between the first player and the second player and that includes at least an IP address of the second player;

in response to the request, transmitting the communication information comprising at least the IP address corresponding to the second player from the game server to the first player, wherein the first player, upon receiving the communication information, initiates the peer-to-peer communication with the second player by using the received communication information, the peer-to-peer communication comprising a voice communication; and

in response to receiving a notification from the first player indicating that the second player communicated to the first player a communication that violates the community policy, removing the second player from the list such that the second player is prohibited from playing multiplayer games hosted on the game server.

39.   (Previously Presented)   The system of Claim 38, wherein the information includes a unique user key that is assigned to the second authorized player by the game system, and which is used by the first player in the attempt to open the peer-to-peer connection with the second player, thereby assuring the second authorized player that the first player's request to open the peer-to-peer communication comes from a trusted player.

40.   (Previously Presented)   The system of Claim 38, wherein the machine instructions further cause the processor to carry out the functions of:

(a) upon receiving a notification that an attempt by the first authorized player to establish the peer-to-peer communication with the second authorized player has failed, providing the second authorized player with information about the first authorized player, the information including any address required to enable the peer-to-peer communication to be established between the first authorized player and the second authorized player; and

(b) requesting the second authorized player to establish the peer- to-peer communication with the first authorized player.

41 - 43   (Canceled).

44.   (Currently Amended) [[A]]The method of~~as recited in~~ claim 33, wherein the list is limited to players on a same team.

45.   (Currently Amended) [[A]]The method of ~~as recited in~~ claim 33, wherein the list is limited to players playing a game within a same game world and within a predetermined proximity within a virtual environment of the game world.

46.   (Currently Amended) [[A]]The method of~~as recited in~~ claim 33, the communication information includes a specific port address.

47.   (Currently Amended) [[A]]The method ~~as recited in~~of claim 33, the IP address comprises an internal IP address associated with a shared Internet connection.

48.   (Currently Amended) [[A]]The method ~~as recited in~~of claim ~~1~~33, wherein the list further ~~lists~~includes at least one other player that is both authenticated with the game server and that is currently not accessing the multiplayer game session.